

Message Text

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14

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 DPW-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /128 W

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R 270630Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2234

INFO CINCPAC

CINCPACREP AUSTRALIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 6942

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AS

SUBJ: CAIRNS ON VIETNAM - END OF A CHAPTER

REF: CANBERRA 6912

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE ENDING OF AT LEAST THE FIRST CHAPTER OF MINISTER JIM CAIRN'S STATEMENTS IN HANOI ABOUT U.S. POLICY IN VIETNAM, THE NATIONAL TIMES AND THE AUSTRALIAN RAN EDITORIALS ON THE SUBJECT OVER THE WEEKEND OF DECEMBER 22. SINCE THAT TIME LITTLE MEDIA ATTENTION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THIS SUBJECT. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS IN FACT REPORT THEIR CORRESPONDENTS IN WASHINGTON AS SAYING U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS CONSIDER THE MATTER CLOSED AS A RESULT OF THE "CONSTRUCTIVE, USEFUL AND FRIENDLY" DISCUSSION IN CANBERRA ON DECEMBER 19 BETWEEN AMBASSADOR GREEN AND PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM.

2. THE AUSTRALIAN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WILL SURVIVE INTACT" DESCRIBES CAIRNS' REMARKS AS EPHEMERAL AND NOT LIKELY TO HAVE A LASTING IMPACT UPON U.S.-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS. THIS PAPER ALSO EMPHASIZES
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THE CONTINUED VITALITY OF ANZUS ALTHOUGH RECOGNIZING

SOME CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN POLICY BY THE CURRENT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES BY STATING THAT THE "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH AMERICA SHOULD NOT BE ONE OF AUSTRALIAN SUBSERVIENCE AND CONSIDERS THAT CAIRNS WOULD BE THE FIRST TO AGREE THAT AUSTRALIA IS NOT IN ANY WAY "ANTI-AMERICAN".

3. THE EDITORIAL IN THE NATIONAL TIMES SEES THE REACTION OF THE USG TO CAIRNS' STATEMENTS AS SERVING ANOTHER PURPOSE, I.E., TO PUT PRESSURE UPON THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ON MATTERS OF FOREIGN POLICY IN WHICH U.S. AND AUSTRALIAN INTERESTS MAY NOT COINCIDE. IN THIS VEIN THE EDITORIAL STATES THE REAL REASON FOR THE U.S. PROTEST OVER CAIRNS' REMARKS IS TO PUT PRESSURE ON AUSTRALIA IN TERMS OF U.S.- AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS. THE EDITORIAL CLOSES BY NOTING THAT THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL EVEN BIPARTISAN SUPPORT IN AUSTRALIA FOR A MORE INDEPENDENT GOA STANCE IN FOREIGN POLICY ALTHOUGH MANY WOULD QUARREL WITH THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT OVER THE DETAILS.

4. NEWS STORIES ALSO APPEARING OVER THE WEEKEND REPORT OPPOSITION PARTY SPOKESMEN PEACOCK AND SNEDDEN CONTINUE TO CALL FOR DISMISSAL OF CAIRNS FROM WHITLAM MINISTRY. THESE STORIES RIGHTLY POINT OUT THAT OPPOSITION ARGUMENT AGAINST CAIRNS APPEARS TO BE BASED MORE ON FACT THAT HE IS STEPPING OUTSIDE HIS PORTFOLIO IN CRITICIZING U.S. POLICY RATHER THAN DEALING WITH SUBSTANCE OF CAIRNS' REMARKS. OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP OBVIOUSLY BEING VERY CAREFUL NOT TO INDICATE ANY DISAGREEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT OVER CHANGE IN ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN POLICY ON ASSUMPTION THAT THIS SUBJECT HAS CONSIDERABLE APPEAL WITHIN AUSTRALIAN ELECTORATE.

5. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF LACK OF COVERAGE ON THIS SUBJECT OVER PAST FEW DAYS, EMBASSY ASSUMES SUBJECT

WILL DROP FROM NEWSPAPERS FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. IT IS PROBABLE THAT CAIRNS' REMARKS WILL HOWEVER BE REMEMBERED SHOULD HE AGAIN ON SOME FUTURE OCCASION CRITICIZE U.S. GOVERNMENT ON THIS OR ANY SIMILAR
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SUBJECT.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Drafter: n/a
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